Primitiæ Regiminis Davidici.

OR,

THE FIRST-FRUITS OF DAVIDS GOVERNMENT,

Vowed to God before, and *offered* at his actual admission thereunto.

REPRESENTED

In a SERMON at the Assises held at *READING*, for the County of *Berks*, *Feb.* 28. 1653.

By SIMON FORD, B. D. and Pastour of the Congregation at St. *Laurence* Church in the said Town.

Published

At the joint desire of the High Sheriffe, and Justices of Peace for the said County, which (with some mis-reports since blown about concerning it, and the Author) inclined him to give way thereunto.

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THE FIRST-FRUITS

OF

DAVID'S

TO THE HONOURABLE,

Judge *Atkins*, one of the Juſtices of the *Common Plea's*; as alſo to the right Worſhipful *William Backhouſe* of *Swallowfield*, Eſq. High Sheriffe of the County of *Berks*; together with the right Worſhipful, the Gentry, both of and out of the Commiſſion for the Peace of the ſaid County; and principally to thoſe, at whoſe requeſt this Sermon was made publique.

My Lord, and Gentlemen,

His Sermon having adventured it ſelf upon the hazardous Trial of God and the Bench, *was adjudged to the* Preſſe, *when its Authour was not by to plead on his own behalf; who ſurely had he been privy to the Judgement, (which was onely reported to him by ſome few of the number) would have intreated the Gentlemen*

not to adventure the reputation of their discretions upon a piece too unworthy the notice of such an Honourable *Judicature.*

I confesse I look upon the coming under the Stationers Presse, *in these dayes, as a punishment to a* Sermon, *no lesse (in its kinde) then that* of the same denomination, *which you in some cases inflict upon offendours; seeing it is thereby exposed to the weight of publique calumnies and reproaches, of which I am sure mine shall not want its sufficient load.*

The onely remedy I have herein, is once more to present its case before you its Judges, (which I doe in this Dedication) *and to intreat you that the* Grand-Inquest *you impannel to enquire concerning it, may be so wise as to understand the evidence of Truth that is in it; and so honest, as not to return an* Ignoramus, *for* Billa vera.

Surely, (My Lord, and Gentlemen) you that are sufficiently acquainted with the Yerburies, Chillendens, Ives's, *and others of an inferiour Order, whom it would be too much*

honour

honour to name, seeds-men of the Devil, with whom this poor Town hath been perpetually pestered and poysoned, will, I doubt not, see cause for that tartnesse of application in the close, for which I have been sufficiently persecuted by the tongues of those, who found their backs too tender to be rubbed.

Those mens names, and some of the Errors and Heresies they vented, I represented to your last Grand-Jury, and hoped they also would have seen cause either to have reported them to your Lordship, and the Bench, or at least not to have mis-reported me, (as some of them did) to others, as unable to justifie my charge.

My Lord, and Gentlemen, *I commit the Vindication of my name, and of this* Truth, *first, to God, who, (I am sufficiently assured) will* bring forth its righteousnesse as the light; *and (among men) to your wiser, and more impartial judgements, hoping that you will (as farre as it concerns you) impresse the substance of it upon your Consciences, and walkings. And I pray that that Edition may*

be

bee correctior & emendatior, *more perfect then the Original Copy it self: that you may* live *Sermons better then I can* Preach *or print them. And upon that account, I will preach and print as often as you please; upon other terms I care not how seldome. And this, because I am*

READING,
May 24. 1654.

(My Lord, and Gentlemen)

Your most zealously affectionate well-wisher, and (upon that account) servant in the Gospel,

SIMON FORD.

A SERMON PREACHED AT THE *Assises*, holden for the County of *Berks* at *Reading*, *Feb.* 28. 1653. Mr. *William Backhouse* of *Swallowfield*, SHERIFFE.

PSAL. 75. 4, 5, 6, 7.

I said (or rather, I will say) to the fools, deal not foolishly: and to the wicked, lift not up the horn, v. 4.

Lift not up your horn on high: speak not with a stiffe neck, v. 5.

For promotion cometh neither from the East, nor from the West, nor from the South, v. 6.

But God is is the Judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another, v. 7.

THis Psalm is a good Magistrates Directory, because it is the Copy of that Kings heart, who was a man after Gods own heart. *David* at the time of the writing hereof, is by most sound Interpreters supposed to have been in that Morning-Twilight of Royalty, a midling condition

between a King and no King, which you have described, 2 *Sam.* 2, and 3 Chapters. *Ishbosheth* the son and heir of *Saul*, the late King, was yet strugling for ten parts in 12 of the whole Kingdome. 'Twas an hot dispute of two years continuance. But at last, *Davids* house grows stronger and stronger, & *Ishbosheths* weaker and weaker, *ch.* 3. 1. This day-star of approaching Royalty, being thus got above the Horizon, and foretelling the nearnesse of the Sunne to dispell the mists of his long doubts and fears, (it is supposed) sets *Davids* harp and heart in tune; and thereupon he takes occasion to testifie his thankfulnesse in this ἐπινίκιον εὐχαριστικόν, or triumphant thankful Ode. His thankfulnesse is partly *Verbal*, in the acknowledgement of Gods faithfulnesse, in so near an issue of an expected mercy, (for this he means by the *nearnesse of Gods name*, v. 1.) and of his Soveraign Power and Justice, in the way wherein he accomplished it, *v.* 7, 8, 9. And partly *Real*, in the resolvednesse of his heart to repair the breaches and ruines of *Sauls* dissolute Government. The whole State, both *Ecclesiastical* and *Civil*, was like a *melted Vessel*, run into a lump of confusion and disorder, (for that is the Original emphasis of that phrase, *The earth and all the inhabitants thereof are dissolved*, v. 3.) And there was no hope that ever it would bee a Vessel for honour or use any more, except a skilful Founder undertook to new-cast it. Such an one was *David*, and that he might give assurance of his undertaking, he before-hand declares the mould or model unto which he will reduce it.

מוג *Dissolutus, liquefactus fuit.*

1. Hee will first cement the broken pieces of the old frames, *viz.* Religion, Law, and Justice, which are the pillars of all Government. v. 3.

2. He will secure those pillars from the insolent petulancy of bold and presumptuous offenders, by a severe execution of the utmost severity and rigour of divine & humane Laws upon them. And both these hee will doe upon the consideration of his conscientious obligation thereunto; and that upon this account, because all his power is confessedly

ſeſſedly ſubordinate to Gods, which is the ſumme of my Text, and the following Verſe.

I will ſay (for ſo I read it with *Pæreus* and *Muſculus*) *unto the fools, deal not ſo fooliſhly, &c.*

For promotion cometh, &c.

In which words you have two general parts:

1. *Davids reſolution* of reformation, *I will ſay, &c.*
2. The *reaſon* of that reſolution. *For promotion, &c.*

In the firſt of theſe you may farther obſerve,

1. The ſubjects of it, *Fools*, (that is, bad men, but ſuch whoſe ſins are only prejudicial to themſelves) & *wicked men*, ſuch who by reaſon of long remiſſeneſſe of Civil Government, during the unquiet and turbulent reign of *Saul*, were grown to a great height of preſumption and violence, daring all Laws both divine and humane out of countenance, which he expreſſeth by two phraſes, ſpeaking with a ſtiffe neck, and lifting up the horn, Metaphors taken from unbroken Colts, or wilde Bulls, who are altogether impatient of the bridle or the yoke. Sons of *Belial* indeed, if the received Etymology of that word hold water. Theſe are the perſons that *David* intends to deal withal in this reſolved reformation.

הוללים, boaſting fools, רשעים, troubleſome fools. בלי־עול *cui non eſt jugum*

2. The nature of it, and that is by way of reſtraint upon their unruly luſts: for this *ſaying* implies *doing*. *De meritâ vindictâ & coercione intelligendum eſt*, ſays one; *Cohibebo* (ſays another) *petulantes regni & eccleſiæ perturbatores, zealous and reſolute Authority uſeth not to ſpeak vain words.* This *ſaying* is like that *Pſal.* 2. 5. where God is ſaid to ſpeak to ſuch another generation of wilde beaſts, but how? ſo, as to *vex them in his ſore diſpleaſure.* So here, *I will ſay to the fools, &c.* is as much, as I will by wholeſome Laws, and a zealous execution of them, either amend their perſons, or (at leaſt) reſtrain their luſts. If they will *deal fooliſhly*, they ſhall not *deal ſo fooliſhly*, and if they will *wear horns* ſtill, yet they ſhall not *lift the horn on high*.

Muſculus.

2. The second general part may look two ways:

1. Either as a *reason* prevailing with *David* thus to put forth his power to curb the insolencies of wicked men. *For promotion* (*i. e.* my promotion, by which I am advanced to the succession of *Sauls* Throne) *cometh, &c.*

2. Or as a *lesson* which he would by just severity teach them, who had sinned themselves into a near affinity to Atheisme, by so long and uncontrolled a liberty of lust, and insolence. *Just severity in Deputy Gods may teach men so much Religion*, as, *that there is a God that judgeth the earth.* But I rather look upon it as a motive to *David* himself. And then the Argument runs thus: I was a while since a poor Shepherds boy, and I am now advanced to the *potentia proxima* of an absolute Royalty. Therefore it concerns me gratefully to acknowledge, and zealously to act for him that advanced me, and (*seeing promotion comes not from the East*, &c. *But God is the Judge*, &c.) I will answer his ends in my advancement.

This part hath two branches:

1. A *negation of power* in any *creature* to give, or take away honour and power. Though all assistance from all quarters of the world should concenter their endeavours for one mans exaltation, they could not do it, if God will pull him down; and *è contra*, Though the whole *posse* of the Creation, were raised to pull a man down, yet if God say nay, their endeavours shall be successeleſſe. *David* here takes his expressions from the Topography of the land of *Palestine*, and expresseth *East* and *West* distinctly, but includes *North* and *South*, both under the expression of *midbar, the Desart*, that Country being on both *North* and *South* sides bounded with waste lands of that denomination. Whence your *Margin* reads it *Desart*, and your English Meter, *forsaken wilderneſſe*.

2. An *assertion of that power and prerogative in God alone. He is Judge*, i. e. absolute, and independent, insomuch that he is no way taxable, though he puts in and puts out, lifts

lifts up, and pulls down according to his own good pleasure; And yet proceeds in a way of regular justice in this case of mal administration. *As a Judge.*

Thus you see I have done this part of my task, *i.e.* taken to pieces this excellent watch, and shewed you the *wheels*, and the *spring*, *Davids reformation*, and the *impulsive cause* of it. But the harder part of my business is yet to come, *viz.* to put it together again, that you may take direction from its hand in the business of so solemn a convention as is that which hath brought you hither this day.

I know the *spring-wheel* should first be taken in hand, as the foundation must be laid before the building, in an exact order of nature. But the order I shall proceed by is Theological, and therefore I shall first begin with the Balance, *Davids* resolution of a just reformation, and then annex the reason at the last, to set it a going.

And first and foremost we wil consider,

The subjects of this reformation. I said unto the *fools*, and to the *wicked*. Such then *David* found, even among the great ones, when he came to the Kingdome; he found beasts, and those armed with power, horned beasts. And such there will be every where, let the Laws bee but a while silenced, and the Magistrate, either sleep, or connive, or both. Observe,

Evils not suppressed, will be spreading Evils. The case of such a *Common-wealth* will quickly be like the *field of the sluggard*, described *Prov.* 24. 31. *all grown over with thorns, and nettles will cover the face thereof*, (for ill weeds grow apace) *and the wall* of order and discipline will quite *be broken down.* There had need be diligent weeders to keep the field of a Common-wealth from being overspread. They had need be good hedges, that must keep in such unruly beasts, as my Text speaks of. *Qui non prohibet peccare, cùm possit, jubet.* If there be none to *forbid* the *fools* to *deal foolishly*,

foolishly, there need be none to *bid* them do so; he bids them, that, when he can, doth not forbid them. Men (in a spiritual sense) are all *natural fools*, *folly is bound up in the heart of a childe*, *Prov.* 22. and they need not be *taught* that *trade*; if they be but permitted to *set up* for themselves, he had need be a wiser man then ordinary that shall keep them within any bounds of Reason or Conscience; for, observe again,

Wickednesse tolerated will grow insolent. Such fools, if the rod of correction do not discipline them, will know no difference, between simple folly and down-right madnesse. The *Asses colt* will turn his *ears* into *horns*, and grow *horn-mad*, and push against all those that shall endeavour to bring him under the yoke. *Sinne* and *Errour lose nothing by indulgence.* If a logge be King, the froggs will quickly be presumptuously petulant, and insult over its sluggishnesse. A Magistrate *couchant*, will quickly make offenders *rampant.* We use to say, when an horse runs away with a young rider, *he knowes who is upon the back of him.* The weaknesse or unskilfulnesse of the hand that manageth him, is a provocation to him to attempt the casting off his burthen. There is nothing which is more intolerable *then a servant when he reigns*, if *Solomon* may be believed, *Prov.* 30.22. When those base lusts of men that under restraint seemed very submisse, are once let at liberty, they will rage the more intolerably; and much, out of anger they have been bridled.

Two things there were in *Sauls* government, and the interval of *Davids*, that exposed the Land to these wilde beasts, and their insolencies, which among the rest of the causes are (like *Saul* himself, among the people) higher by the shoulders.

1. *A perpetual Militia.* Warres, Forain and Civil, defensive and offensive. And those (though never so necessary) like ill Physick, breed more ill humours, then they purge out. All Civil Authority must be silent, while the ratling of Arms drowns their voice; and the *sword of the*

Law

Law muſt ſubmit to the *Law of the ſword.* Thence the Souldiers in *Plutarch* wondered that any one ſhould *read Law* to them that *wore it* by their ſides, ὁ πόσοις ἡμῖν ὡπλισμένοις ξίφη, νόμους ἀναγινώσκοντες; Warre (in a ſort) neceſſitates irregularities, not onely againſt Civil, but even Military Laws: Martial Law, ſaith one, is as great a Soloecisme, as Martial peace. *Plut. in Pompeio.*

Modern Policy.

Thence when God threatneth warre to his people, he tells them that Military Inſolency ſhall caſt contempt upon Civil Magiſtracy, *they ſhall ſmite the Judge of Iſrael with a rod upon the cheek,* Micah 5:1. And when he calls for that Judgement upon a people, he is ſaid to invite the *beaſts of the field to devour,* *Iſa.* 56.9. There is a kinde of *cuſtomary ferity* bred in the mindes of men, by conſtant and familiar converſe with inſtruments of death and violence, which will not eaſily be charmed into a peaceable ſubmiſſion to civil reſtraints, though the moſt diſcreet Magiſtrate *charm never ſo wiſely.* Far be it from me, to aſperſe the perſons of any of that profeſſion among us. I can truly ſay of divers of them, what *Tertullus* ſaid flatteringly, concerning *Felix* the Governour of *Judæa,* *by them we enjoy great quietneſs,* which we cannot but *accept alwayes, and in all places with much thankfulneſſe,* *Act.* 24. 2,3. But I ſpeak of the influences of that profeſſion upon the generality of thoſe that profeſſe it, and the people living under the exerciſe of it. *Militaribus animis,* (ſays *Saluſt*) *adhibenda fomenta ut pacem ferre velint.* I dare ſay, your Lordſhips experience can teſtifie that moſt of thoſe that make a trade of the high-way, are the reliques of routed and disbanded Forces, who (like the unjuſt Steward) *cannot digge, and to begge are aſhamed,* and therefore follow that trade.

2. *The maintaining of a faction oppoſite to the faithful Prophets and Prieſts of the Lord.* *Samuel* for many years before *Sauls* death was laid aſide, as a man of too rigid a ſpirit for *Sauls* deſignes; and *Abimelech* and the Prieſts were looked upon as confederate with *David,* and upon the information of a treacherous *Doeg,* murdered upon ſuſpicion

ſuſpicion thereof. And no wonder, if they that are grown ſo bold, as to trample upon the Embaſſadours of God, make as bold with the Laws and Ordinances of man. I am ſure, in Gods juſt judgement, *Civil confuſions* have uſed to accompany *Church confuſions*; when *Judah* in *Abijahs* time was *without a teaching Prieſt*, they were alſo without *peace*, they went in and out of their own houſes with hazard of their lives, 2 *Chron.* 15. 3. I am glad, we of this Nation are at laſt grown ſo wiſe as to ſee that *Church-Levelling* needs nothing but a power to its will to introduce *State-Levelling* too; and that the *Honourable Robes* of Magiſtracy and Law are at the barre of many mens ignorant and ſottiſh fury, no leſſe guilty of Antichriſtianiſme, then the *contemptible black coats* of the Miniſtry of the Goſpel. Aſſure your ſelves, My Lord, and you of the worſhipfull Bench, that 'tis only the awe of Conſcience that ſubdues the fury, and rage of mens luſts; your Proviſions of Law are a *lower bank*, which theſe violent waves will quickly break over, when once they ſwell above thoſe ſacred *main banks* of Religious Principles and Inſtitutions. *Let Magiſtrates maintain Gods Ordinances, God will theirs.*

In this caſe *David* found the Kingdome, a kind of wilderneſſe of wilde beaſts. And therefore we need not wonder at his *reſolution* of a ſevere reformation, of ſetting the nets and toils of good Laws to take them, (my next head which now comes to hand.)

I will ſay unto the fools, &c. Obſerve.

Inſolent offenders muſt be curbed with a reſolute ſeverity. All diſeaſes (ſay Phyſicians of greateſt note) are cured by contraries. And (by conſequence) the diſeaſes of the body Politick occaſioned by remiſsneſſe, require more rough and churliſh Phyſick to remove them. *Ne corporis quidem morbos, veteres, & diu auctos niſi per dura & aſpera coerceas: corruptus, & corrumpens, æger & flagrans animus haud levioribus remediis reſtinguendus eſt quàm libidinibus ardeſcit*, ſayes *Tacitus*. Stiffe-necked Colts will not

not be managed with a ſlack rein. Let *David* come to the Throne with never ſo much reſolution, yet he will finde enough to do when hee comes to act that reſolution. He will finde cauſe to complain that the ſons of *Zerviah are too ſtrong for him*, 2 Sam. 3. 39. Wherefore he is fain to die in their debt, and to leave it upon his ſonne *Solomon* to diſcharge, 1 *Kings* 2. 5. And when he goes out of the world his laſt words back his firſt reſolution, 2 *Sam.* 23. 6, 7. *But the ſonnes of* Belial, *&c.*

In ſuch caſes, a Magiſtrate had need to ſharpen the *ſword* of Juſtice with the *file* of reſolution; *Fiat juſtitia, ruat cœlum.* Come what will, or can come, he muſt be armed againſt it with a fixed purpoſe of getting the enemies ground, or dying upon his own: of gaining the horſe, or loſing the ſaddle, *ſawing* off the horns of theſe wilde beaſts, or being *gored* by them. He muſt reſolve to be the *Champion* of Juſtice whiles he can, and when he can no longer be ſo, he muſt become her Martyr.

A Judges *heart* and his *robes*, muſt be both *dyed in grain*, elſe the *colour* of the one, and the *courage* of the other will quickly fade. Good Miniſters ſhould have the Motto of *Aarons* Mitre written upon their fore-heads, *Holineſſe to the Lord*; and Magiſtrates ſhould have written upon their hearts, what *Moſes* had on his, *Reſolution for the Lord.* This alone will fortifie a man againſt all mollifying conſiderations. Thus the ſons of *Levi* came armed to execute the vengeance of the Lord againſt Idolaters, *Deut.* 33. 9. compared with *Exod.* 32. 26, 27, 28 But *when* doth *David* reſolve to put theſe reſolves in Execution? Even as ſoon as the reins of Government are put into his hand. As ſoon as he *receives the Congregation*, *v.* 2. And leſt we ſhould think this was the iſſue of ſome haſty thoughts, which upon better advice he would ſee cauſe not to ſtand to; you ſhall hear him back it in another Pſalm. *I will early deſtroy all the wicked of the Land*, Pſal. 101. *ult.* Obſerve (from the time)

That *Magiſtrates reforming reſolutions muſt be ſpeedily and effectually proſecuted.* For, 1. Good

1. Good resolutions will cool again, when they are off from the fire of a present good mood, if they be not speedily put in execution.

2. Delays in this case are dangerous; when the fire once gets to the house top, the least delay will quickly render it unquenchable. If a small Army be suffered to entrench, and victuall *themselves*, a great strength will have enough to do to conquer them.

If the Sea break in upon a Land, it may be at the first a little labour will repair the bank; but if it be neglected but a few dayes, all the Countrey cannot turn it out again.

Novi ego quod primò fuerat medicabile vulnus,
Neglectum longæ damna tulisse moræ.

2 Tim. 2.17. Wickedness will spread *as a Gangrene*, (and especially that which the Apostle speaks of in that place, Heresie) and toleration makes it incurable.

3. Opportunities and seasons of doing good, are not in our hands, but Gods. This is the ground of that advice of *Mordecai* to *Hester*. *Who knoweth but that thou art come to the Kingdome for such a time as this?* Hester 4. 13.

And this leads me to the second general part of my Text, *the ground of* Davids *resolution*, [*For promotion cometh neither from the East, &c.*]

Which words are an *universal negation* of creature-power in the managery of State-affaires, farther then Gods Providence co-operates with it. *Men are apt to expect advancement from second causes. Politicians* use to have their Engines at work in all Quarters. Such correspondencies in the *East*, and such in the *West*, *&c.* And they are apt to conclude, if but such or such a designe take (one of many) that makes for their advantage. And when their plots are spoiled in one part, yet they maintain hope from another quarter of the world. And indeed, *This is the spring of all manner of irregular compliances*, with those

thoſe from whom we expect furtherance in our deſignes, that we look upon them, as our Advancers. Thence (ſaith *Solomon*) *many ſeek the Rulers favour*, *Prov.* 29. 26. and that with ſordid and horrid encroachments upon the principles of ingenuity and conſcience, licking up the very ſpittle of great ones, (as is reported of *Dyoniſius* his flatterers) and conforming to their very vices, and imperfections, as is reported of *Alexanders* Courtiers, that imitated his wry neck.

And in the laſt Kings Reign, in the encroachments upon the publique liberty by Ship-money and Monopolies, His Judges, (all but one or two that went with honour to their graves) perſwaded him 'twas Law, and his Divines 'twas Conſcience. As if they had both been of the mind of *Cambyſes* his Councellors, who adviſing with them in a caſe of inceſtuous marriage, they told him all the Statute Law of the Land was againſt him; but there was another Law, that the King might do what he would.

And *the ready way to keep men from irregular courſes for advancement, is to perſwade them,* (O that God would do it) *that vain is the help of man. Truſt not in Princes, nor in the ſonne of man,* (ſaith *David*) *in whom there is no help*, *Pſal.* 146. 3.

And, *Curſed be he that maketh fleſh his arm, and whoſe heart departeth from the Lord.* Creature-confidence is the mother of Apoſtaſie, and defeatment, *Ier.* 17. 5, 6.

But where then is the *ſpring of preferment?* And from what Fountain doth it flow? The laſt part of my Text tells you, *God is the Judge, he putteth down one, and ſetteth up another.* Of which in a few words, and then I ſhall diſmiſſe you with a word or two by way of application to the preſent occaſion.

Obſerve hence,

All the Tranſlations of Civil power in the world, are the effects of a Divine, and that, a juſt Providence. God works theſe changes, and that as a *Iudge*, in a judicial way.

There is nothing in the world of more common *obſer-*

vation, and leſſe ſolemn and ſanctified *meditation*, then the various turnings of the wheel of Providence. One while,
Pſ. 78. 71. a *David* taken from the Sheep-coat, from *following the Ews great with young*, and advanced (in *Homers* phraſe) ὀϛ ποιμένα λαῶν, to be a *Shepherd of men*, his Sheephook changed into a Scepter, and his ſeat of Turf to a Royal throne. A *Ioſeph* from an impriſoned ſlave, to a Royal Favourite.
Judg. 6. 11. A *Gideon*, from a threſhing floor, raiſed to be a Saviour of *Iſrael*, and his *threſhing inſtrument of wood*, changed into
Iſa. 41. 15. one of *iron, to threſh the mountains*, as God himſelf phraſeth it. *Heſter* a poor captive maid, advanced to a royal bed, *Heſt.* 2. 6, 17. And in prophane ſtories, a Dictator from the Plough, and an Emperour from the hog-trough, a third from keeping the Cowes. And our *Hen.* the 8. took his two great Favourites, the one from the Slaughter-houſe, and the other from the Forge.

Judg. 1. 7. On the other ſide, *Adonibezek* a mighty Prince, made
Dan. 4. 28. Fellow-Commoner with the Dogs; and *Nebuchadnezzar*, a mighty Conquerour, and one that lifted his horn to a great height, turned a grazing with the Oxen; and *Herod* in his moſt ſumptuous apparel, and amidſt the ſhouts and acclamations of his people, reduced from a con-
Acts 12. 23. ceited God, to be the moſt loathſome of men; a living carrion, arreſted by the vileſt of creatures, upon the ſuit of his affronted Creator. A great *Haman* feaſted with the King one day, and made a feaſt for Crowes the next, *Heſt.* 7. 10.

Bajazet. And in humane ſtories, who knowes not that one of the greateſt Commanders in the world, was carried about in an Iron-grate, to be a foot-ſtool to an inſulting Conquerour? That *Beliſarius* the famouſeſt General that the later Age of the Roman Empire knew, and in greateſt favour with *Iuſtinian* his Prince, was reduced to that want, that he was fain to beg for his living, *Date obolum Beliſario.* This is commonly the lot of great Favourites, *Fatum potentiæ rarò ſempiternæ,* (ſayes *Tacitus*) *quippe ſatias capit aut illos cùm omnia tribuerunt, aut hos cùm nihil reliquum eſt quod cupiant.*

cupiant. The common fate of worldly preferment, that it ſeldome laſts, Princes being either cloy'd with giving their favours, or ſubjects with receiving them; when they have no more to give, nor theſe to receive.

And in our dayes, theſe changes and revolutions of the wheel of Providence have been ordinary.

We have ſeen in one *Royal Family*, (and that one of the moſt eminent in theſe parts of the world) a great and puiſſant Monarch, in the face of the Sunne, at noon-day, at the gate of his own Palace, in the moſt populous City of theſe three Nations, in the midſt of thouſands of his paſſionate well-wiſhers, and zealous partizans, laying his head upon a fatal block; three Queens of his line and alliance, reduced to the Contribution of Foraigners, for a mean ſubſiſtence; and a numerous iſſue of the ſame family, cruſhed under the ſame wheel of Providence, in whom not many years ſince theſe Nations rejoyced, as the budding hopes of an uninterrupted ſucceſſion.

We have ſeen a *Parliament*, the darling of the people, ſitting under the protection of a perpetual Act, crumbled into pieces, and at laſt wholly diſſolved with the *crucifige* of that very people, that a few years ſince cryed *Hoſanna*, and proſtrated their very hearts at their feet, to pave them a triumphant entrance into that truſt they had elected them unto.

We have ſeen a formidable *Meteor of Policy* lately elevated to a great height of confidence and preſumption, *lifting up the horn on high*, or (as a Learned *Iew* reads the words) *againſt the high God*, and *ſpeaking with a ſtiffe neck*, caught like *Abrahams* Ramme, *by the horns in a buſh*, and made a juſt ſacrifice to the ſcorn and contempt of all men; and their *Arms withered* in the very act, for ſtretching them out againſt the Prophets of the Lord. *R. Immanuel.*

In a word, ſuch changes of publique affairs, as if the ſtarres, or thoſe that pretend to great familiarity with them, had been but ordinary Prophets, they could not have overſeen, without an inexcuſable neglect. Such wonderful

wonderful, and momentous Providences as all *Europe* is concerned in, ſhould not in my judgemeut have been omitted among our Calculatours, (who are at leiſure to take abundant notice of (that farre more inconſiderable thing) *the Clergy*) except poſſibly they calculated the Common-wealths Nativity upon black Munday, when they had not light enough to erect their Scheme. However at the preſent, let them paſſe with this *memento*, that *it is not for vain man, to know the times and ſeaſons, which the Father hath kept in his own power*; and that undoubtedly, God Almighty is better able to keep his own counſel, then to acquaint the Starres with ſuch affaires, or at leaſt their Secretaries, who make a livelihood of blabbing all that they know, and more too. But (to leave this digreſſion.)

Acts 1. 7.

This is that great Truth, which Scripture ſo much inculcates upon men, that (it ſeems) are very ſlow of heart to believe it. How often doth God tell us this truth, in various forms of expreſſions? *That he raiſeth the poor out of the duſt, and lifteth the needy from the dunghill, that he may ſet him with Princes*, Pſal. 113. 7. *That he poureth contempt upon Princes, and maketh them to wander in the wilderneſſe*, whiles (on the other ſide) he *ſetteth the poor on high*, Pſal. 107. 41, 42. that he *raiſeth the beggar from the dunghil, and maketh him to inherit the Crown of glory*, becauſe the *pillars of the earth are his*, 1 Sam. 2. 7, 8. that he *cuts off the ſpirit of Princes, and is terrible to all the Kings of the earth*, Pſal. 76. 12.

Inſomuch, that it ſeems wonderful to me, that (after ſo much clear conviction, both from Scripture and experience) the luſtre of preſent greatneſſe ſhould uſually ſo blind the eyes of great ones, and flatter them with a perſwaſion of immunity from theſe changes, as it doth. That their *inward thought* ſhould ſtill be, (that which this Pſalmiſt notes, as a great folly, *That their houſes ſhall continue for ever, and their dwelling places to all generations*, *Pſal.* 49. 11. That they conceit their *mountain* to be ſo *ſtrong*, *that*

that they ſhall never be moved, Pſalm 30. 6, 7.

That when men caſt about all manner of wayes for advancement, they ſhould not ſo much as think of God; nay, that they ſhould entertain an Atheiſtical conceit, that a Conſcientious walking with God, is the only way to ſpoil their preferment. (As if indeed that which *Balak* told *Balaam*, who was a little too nice for his deſigne, were true, that the *Lord keeps men from honour.*) That he that will be great, muſt have a Conſcience as large as his deſignes, leſt being too ſtraight-laced, it cauſe miſcarriage. That *ſeeming* good ſhould be accounted a more ready road to greatneſſe, then *being* ſo. Surely, did men believe God to be the Soveraign Diſpoſer of all preferments, they would in reaſon be able to conclude, that he would advance his own ſervants rather then others, if advancement be good for them. But becauſe men do not cordially believe this Truth, therefore they neglect him, and proſtitute their Conſciences to the baſe luſts of others. Inſomuch, that a man would think, when he reads the ſtories of ſome great Politicians lives, that the Devil and they had ſtruck a bargain upon the terms, which our Saviour refuſed. *Luke* 4. 6. *All this power will I give thee, and the glory of theſe Kingdomes, for that is delivered to me, and to whomſoever I will, I give it. If therefore thou wilt worſhip me, all ſhall be thine.* Or, that they had been bred with that great French Courtier, that choſe a part in *Paris*, before a part in *Paradiſe*. Or, Laſtly, that they had learned thoſe Heathen Politicks of Num. 24. 11.

Flectere ſi nequeo ſuperos Acheronta movebo; *Virg.*

And,

Varo, reguſtatum digito terebrare ſalinum
Contentus perages, ſi vivere cum Iove tendis. *Perſ.*

How much better were it for men to keep *Gods high-way* to greatneſſe, which though it may ſeem the *farther way*

way about to them that are in haſte, yet(conſidering, that *he that maketh haſte to be rich cannot be innocent*, as *Solomon* ſayes, *Prov.* 28. 20. and that they that purchaſe the *whole world* with the loſſe of their *own ſouls*, get nothing, when a dying Conſcience caſts up their accounts, *Matth.* 16.26.) it is the nearer way by farre; Eſpecially when we have Gods ſolemn engagement for it, that *thoſe that honour him, he will honour, and they that deſpiſe him ſhall be ſleightly eſteemed*, 1 Sam. 2. 30.

Laſtly,(conſidering this great Truth) I cannot but wonder at the ſpirit that thoſe men are of, who in ſuch changes, as fall out againſt the grain of their expectations, carry themſelves rather like Atheiſts then Chriſtians under them.

1. Sometimes in a pet at God himſelf, throwing off that mask of Religion, which they had hoped might have advantaged them; and becauſe this *evil is from the Lord*, they are reſolved to *wait upon him no longer*, like that wicked Prince, who is branded upon record for that ungodly reſolution, 2 *Kings* 6. 33. How many have all Ages of the Church known, who becauſe they could not obtain their deſigned greatneſſe, by profeſſion of Orthodoxy and Piety, have attempted to recover it by Apoſtacy and Perſecution?

2. And ſometimes in a furious and Diabolical rage, fuming and foaming againſt the Inſtruments cauſing or occaſioning them. How familiar a thing hath it been with our deboiſt gallantry in theſe late years, to drink healths to the confuſion of this party, and that party, to curſe,and devote to the Devil ſuch and ſuch men, as the Authors or Promoters of thoſe events, they ſtorm at?

Not conſidering, that (as we ſay) *the Fox never fares better then when he is curſed*: nor, that the worſt of men, in the worſt actions, do but Midwife Gods ſecret intendments, that the crucifying of the *Lord of glory*, was indeed the *pre-determined counſel of God*, *Act.* 4. 28. though the ſin of that wicked act were the guilt of thoſe that acted there-

therein: nor that their own ſinnes impower thoſe Inſtruments, that thus thwart their deſignes; and that when God makes ſuch changes, he doth it *as a Judge*, for the juſt puniſhment of thoſe whom he afflicts thereby. Which opens a door to the laſt branch of this laſt part of the Text.

God is the Judge.

Whence obſerve,

The greateſt changes in the world are judicial Acts of Gods Providence. Not meer *acts of Soveraignty*, in which God acts by Prerogative, although it be his Prerogative ſometimes ſo to act. Whence (although God uſe arguments from this Prerogative, to ſilence our cavils, in thoſe great differences which he makes between one man and another; eſpecially in relation to ſalvation and damnation, wherein the Apoſtles Anſwer hath hitherto among ſerious and ſolid Chriſtians, been judged ſatisfactory. *Hath not the Potter power over the clay*, &c. *Rom.* 9.12. Nay, and even in State-changes, he makes uſe of the ſame ſimilitude, *Jer.* 18.8. Yet,) he hath a rule of juſtice which hee commonly walks by; not only that *ſecret will* of his which makes things juſt, becauſe he wills them; but alſo that *revealed Law of righteouſneſſe*, which he hath laid down in his Word. So that it may be truly ſaid, (as to us and our demerits) that no man loſeth honour or eſtate, but he that firſt forfeits it. If God caſt out the *Canaanites*, and bring *Iſrael* in to tread upon the necks of their Kings, it is when *their iniquities are full*; and if God reject *Saul*, it is becauſe he rejects God firſt; and if he make the ſonnes of *Eli* vile, it is becauſe they *made themſelves vile*, and made his *ſacrifice to be abhorred.* And even *Job* himſelf (though he were a ſingular example, and his abaſement was rather a deſigne to doe him good, then a puniſhment for any notorious evil, yet) dares not plead his own innocency, except in the particulars which his friends charged

Gen. 15.16.

1 Sam. 15.26.

1 Sam. 3.13.

him withal, injuſtice and hypocriſie, *Job* 9. 14, 15.

But the cauſes of ſuch judgements are not alwayes diſcernable to others, no, nor (it may be) to the men themſelves, that are the ſubjects of them, (though godly,) and therefore (even to *Job* himſelf) it was good counſel that he ſhould ſay to the Lord, *Shew me wherefore thou contendeſt with me* Job 10. 2. and, *If I have done iniquity, I will do ſo no more*, Job 34. 31, 32.

Sometimes, they are the ſinnes of the firſt Founders of a Family that entail forfeitures upon their poſterity: As in the caſe of *Jehu*, who doing Gods work with a ſpirit of private revenge, cuts off the ſucceſſion from his line after four generations, 2 *Kings* 10. 30. *Hoſ.* 1. 4.

And in the caſe of *Iſhboſheth*, whoſe Title to the Crown of *Iſrael Saul* forfeited, it may be before he was born, at leaſt before he poſſeſſed it.

Sometimes the ſinnes of an immediate parent, and he godly too, as in the caſe of *Eli* and his poſterity, may entail an affliction. So in the caſe of *Solomon* and his poſterity, the Kings of *Judah*. *Rehoboam* loſt ten Tribes for his Fathers ſinne.

1 Kings 11. 31

Sometimes it is for the ſinnes of the people upon whom ſuch changes have an influence. As when God ſaith in *Hoſ.* 13. 11. *I have given them Kings in mine anger, and have taken them away in my wrath.* See alſo *Iſa.* 3. 1, 2, 3, 4.

And (in my judgement) this very conſideration ſhould move all perſons under any employment, to lay out their utmoſt intereſts and abilities for God. The wheel of Providence is perpetually turning, the higheſt ſpokes will quickly be lower. He that put down ſome for mal-adminiſtration, will (as he can) put down you, if you adminiſter the affairs you are intruſted withal as they did.

Surely *David* had often ſuch thoughts. If *Saul* were caſt off becauſe he ſpared where God bade him ſtrike, becauſe he permitted wickedneſſe to range unbridled over the Nation, and to lift up the horn on high, God will lay me aſide

ſide too, if I follow his ſteps. Therefore *I will ſay*, &c.

It is that that concerns moſt of us ſeriouſly to conſider.

As for the *Miniſtry*, God hath poured contempt upon them in an abundant meaſure; and truly, conſidering what a company of ignorant, ſordid, ſottiſh, lazy, Popiſh fellows, walk up and down in the garb of that profeſſion, *I* wonder that errour, and ſacriledge, have proceeded no farther againſt them, then they have. Can any expect, but God ſhould forſake his Sanctuary, when the Prieſts make his ſacrifices to be abhorred?

For my part, I am as zealous for the Calling and Maintenance of the Miniſtery of *England*, as any that hears me can bee. But I deſire thoſe of my brethren here preſent this day, to be perſwaded, that whatever contempt hath been or may be poured upon that reverend Calling, ſome of their own profeſſion have occaſionally been guilty of.

And, as for the *Gentry*, I believe there is ſcarce a Noble Family in the whole Nation at this time, but God hath during theſe laſt troubles, brought under ſome diſparagement, or diminution, or both.

For my part, I can ſay from my heart, that I have not a levelling ſpirit, and I think it a ſad judgement to a people, when *they that were brought up in ſcarlet embrace dunghils*, *Lam.* 4. 5. God preſerve civil diſtinctions in *England*.

But, O that God would give them hearts to conſider the juſtice of his proceedings, in the ſeverity of his dealing with them, and to examine themſelves concerning the cauſe of it. Shall I help you a little to finde it out? Look upon the *great Charter*, the *Scripture-Patent*, by which (as to God) all men hold their honours, 1 *Sam.* 2. 30. Have you not diſhonoured God the more, for the power he hath given you above others? God hath brought Nobility and Gentry low in *England*, and if they walk in the ſinnes of their Families, which commonly have been, and yet are in moſt places, (a few only excepted)

pride, wantonneſſe, drunkenneſſe, ſwearing, gaming, and all manner of debauchery; oppreſſing their poor neighbours, and tenants, Simoniacal and Sacrilegious encroachment upon Church-maintenance, joined with contempt of God, his Miniſters, and Ordinances, let them be aſſured God will bring them lower; he will reverſe their Eſchucheons, break their ſwords, and cut off their ſpurres, and bring ſuch a rot into their families, that their dwelling places ſhall know them no more.

Luke 20.16. Your hearts are ready to ſay (I know) as they did, when Chriſt told them God would *take away his Vineyard from them, and let it out to other husbandmen.* God forbid. And for my part, I heartily joyn with you in that prayer, ſo Gods Honour and his Truth may be ſaved; otherwiſe, let all the Titles in the world goe for me. Better the *pride* of mans *glory* ſhould be *ſtained*, then Gods any way diſparaged: For a remedy of theſe evils, I beſeech you, (Sirs) let my counſel be accepted of you. For Gods ſake, and your own, and your poſterities ſake, *Get the true knowledge and fear of God into your Families; doe not maintain a company of Ruffians, Drunkards, Swearers, and unclean wretches, in your Livery; uſe them to Reading, Prayer, Repetition of Sermons, thoſe contemned exerciſes of true and real godlineſſe; ride abroad, and encourage honeſt Lectures, and bring your Tenants in by your example, who ſeldome goe to Heaven or Hell, but as their Landlords lead them. Get Bibles and Catechiſmes, and Books of Practical Divinity, as* Perkins, Preſton, Reynolds, Sibs, Bolton, Greenham, &c. *into your houſes, in ſtead of Cards and Dice, and Tables; reſtore* (if it be to be known) *what ſacrilegious bits any of your Anceſtours have devoured; give more to a godly Miniſter to maintain him, then to a drunken Huntſman or Falconer; let not the Goſpel be cheaper to you then your pleaſures. Think not leſſe Religion will carry a Gentleman to Heaven, then a poor labourer. Nay, I tell you he had need of more, if Chriſt may be believed*, Matthew 19. 24.

If

If I am plainer with you then you desire, I pray forgive me this wrong, seeing I do it for your good.

My Apology for it is that of *Salust*, when he had ript open the vices of his times, *Bonum nulla oratio lædere potest; quippe vera, necesse est benè prædicet, falsam illius vita moresque facile superant.* *Salust. Bell. Jugurth.*

And now the Publique solemnity of this dayes meeting, calls for some particular addresses, to those for whose sake I was called hither. And they shall be very brief, because I am loath to be your hinderance from your publique businesses.

And first of all, my businesse is to you, *My Lord*, concerning whom, though I am a stranger to your face and acquaintance, yet the reputation you have among good men, where you are most known, emboldens me to say as the Apostle *Paul* in another case concerning the *Corinthians*, that *your forwardnesse of minde* is such, that it is *something superfluous* for me to exhort you: and let me add (from him also) thus much, that I hope you will *shew the proof of your love* to Religion and Justice, and of our *boasting on your behalf*. Onely I beseech you to give mee leave faithfully to represent to you the state of the County you have now to doe withal, that so your *forward minde* may have sufficient matter to work upon. Judge *Atkins*, 2 Cor. 9. 1. 2 Cor. 8. ult.

And first of all, (*my Lord*) as *to Religion*, I know not what we are; I am sure very few of us are what we should bee. But for this little Town where your present employment lies, I speak my thoughts freely, without spleen, or passion, that I verily perswade my self, if all *Augustines*, and *Epiphanius*'s Catalogues of Heresies were lost, and all other ancient and modern Records in that kinde, yet it were no hard matter to restore them with considerable enlargements from hence.

We

We have Anabaptiſme, Familiſme, Socinianiſme, Pelagianiſme, Raunting, (and what not?) and the Devil is ſerved in Heterodoxe Aſſemblies as frequently as God in ours. There is one of the moſt eminent Church-Livings in this County poſſeſſed by a blaſphemer; and one in whoſe houſe, I believe ſome here can teſtifie, the Devil is viſibly as familiar, as any one of the Family. And ſhall the *horns* of theſe beaſts never be pared off by the Civil Magiſtrate? My Lord, I beſeech you act, (I know you will) to the uttermoſt of your power to reſtrain theſe unruly beaſts, and where you want power, repreſent that want to thoſe that can beſtowe it; and I hope by this time they ſee need enough to do ſo themſelves.

D. Porta. Who ſhall be proſecuted when ever any power ſhall be eſtabliſhed to take cognizance of Church-affairs. The perſon intended is notoriouſly known in thoſe parts, and needs not to be named till opportunity is offered to proſecute him.

As for Civil Affairs, we have (bleſſed bee God) ſome among us, that would be zealous and faithful in the offices they are intruſted withal, if they might be borne out in ſo doing. Wee had the laſt year a few active Officers, and no leſſe then three or four vexatious ſuits, and ſome of them (it may bee) may come before your Lordſhip this Aſſiſes, commenced againſt them by notorious offenders, for pretended irregularity in ſome circumſtances.

My Lord, you have one ſuit before you (at the leaſt) from the iſſue whereof the whole Country will collect whether they may dare to doe Juſtice, or no. Surely, if Humane Law-givers be like the Divine, no man ſhould be puniſhed for too much zeal in the execution of the Law.

1 Theſſ. 5.7. My Lord, Drunkenneſſe is grown more impudent among us, then it was in Saint *Pauls* time. And our Officers dare not meddle with a *Gentle-man Drunkard*, for fear of an action of battery.

Nehem. 13.11, 17, 25. And for Sabbath-breakers; would God we had Magiſtrates among us of *Nehemiahs* temper, that would *contend with them*, and *lay hands* upon them too. I am in hope, a word from your Lordſhip would do much towards the execution of thoſe Acts and Ordinances that concern

concern that buſineſſe. Here be inſolent Robbers about the Countrey, almoſt every where; ſcarce a Gentlemans, or other able mans houſe round about this Town, but hath been aſſaulted, or threatned at leaſt, and ('tis ſaid) there is a *Corporation* of them. I hope Juſtice will make ſome of them free of the *Hang-mans Corporation*, for a terror to others.

As for you *Gentlemen*, that are of the *Commiſſion for the peace*, I doe ſomewhat pleaſe my ſelf, that I can now call the moſt of you confidently by that name. We were like to have had (not long ſince) a *Linſey-wolſey Heterogeneous Bench*, ſuch as the *Medley-Conſtitution* of thoſe times would allow. And indeed it was not to be expected, but that thoſe that endeavoured the extirpation of the *Miniſtery* to ſet up *Jeroboams Prieſts*, ſhould diſcard the *Gentry*, and fill their ſeats with *John of Leydens Dukes*, both of the ſame ſtuffe, the *meaneſt of the people*.

(Though I would not hereby diſparage thoſe whoſe known worth makes them eſteemed in the Country, who have the thing which firſt gave Nobility, and are as fit to begin a line of Honour to be continued to their poſterity, as thoſe from whom our preſent Gentry deſcend. But I conceive, that ſuch mixtures, except very ſparingly made, and that upon weighty conſiderations, much prejudice the eſteem of Authority to the people.)

I beſeech you, honoured Sirs, doe not think it enough to appear upon the Bench at Aſſiſes, and general Seſſions, but appoint frequent, and ſtanding Privy Seſſions, to rectifie publique diſorders in the Countrey upon the place, to put down *Ale-houſes*, *the Devils Univerſities*, where men proceed Graduates in all manner of wickedneſſe; to ſuppreſſe Drunkenneſſe, Swearing, Sabbath-breaking: and when inferiour Officers preſent ſuch offenders before you, doe not tell them by your ſleight entertainment of them, that you are of *Gallio's* minde, and *care for none of thoſe things*.

I have heard ſome Officers complain of late, that they are

are discouraged in that part of their office: they are zealous in taking hold of such offenders, and when they come to the Justice he releaseth them. He that (having your power) does not not *cut off* these offenders *horns*, wears them, yea, and will push with them also in time. I never knew any Magistrate indulging any sinne, but either he was guilty of it himself, or more then ordinarily inclined to it, had he sutable opportunity.

And you *Grand Inquest-men*, I am somewhat ignorant of your particular Function, but I conceive one main part of your businesse, is to make presentment of those grievances, wherein the Countrey whom you represent, needs redress. And I hope you will not forget two things, which I think to be of great concernment, the one is, *want of Church-Government*, without which, Civil Government cannot be long preserved in a Christian Common-wealth. Church-levelling, and State-levelling, are Twins; onely (like *Jacob* and *Esau*) the one rough and hairy, and not so apt to be dandled and made much of, by the Magistrate, who usually is tender in such things as concern publique peace; but the other a more sweet babe, which under the notion of tendernesse of Conscience, and Christian Liberty, hath been the fondling of former Governours, untill it had almost proved a *Jacob*, a *Supplanter* indeed, by exchanging the *voice of Jacob*, for the *hands of Esau*.

The other is, *Liberty of Prophecying*, through the indulgence of former Powers, grown to such an height, that every whipping-boy, when he hath gotten an Hereticall notion or two by the end, hath impudence enough to intrude into any Pulpit to vent it; or else to draw aside poor silly souls into corners, and infect them there without controll. And some of them though they usurp the *place of the Clergy*, yet if they should fall into your hands, would not be capable of the *priviledge of the Clergy*, and hang for not being able to read.

Friends, for Gods sake, for the Gospels sake, for your poor

poor ſouls ſake, for your near relations ſake, ſome of whom are in perpetual danger of being poiſoned, tell your ſuperiours, as the voice of all that love the welfare of *Jeruſalem* in the County, that *nothing is ſo intolerable, as a boundleſſe Toleration.*

You of *both Juries*, take heed to your Oaths and Conſciences, and remember that *he that condemneth the righteous, and he that acquitteth the wicked, are both an abomination to the Lord.* If any ſilly Cattel come before you, do not gratifie a malicious proſecutor by ſaying their *ears* are *horns*; but where you finde *horns* indeed, and thoſe *lifted up*, and ſuch as have uſed to *puſh in time paſt*, you know the Law of God as well as man, allowes you to return ſuch guilty. Prov. 17. 15.

I had almoſt forgotten you, *Gentlemen of the Gown*, and 'tis a wonder I ſhould, when I ſpoke of *Levelling*. I honour your profeſſion, and therefore I will preſume to adventure a little good counſel to your acceptance, without any other *fee*, then the teſtimony of a *good Conſcience*, in the diſcharge of my duty. You know that Law is the *Sanctuary* of a free ſubject; for Gods ſake, do not you be guilty of turning it into an *Inquiſition-houſe*, where poor mens cauſes are ſo long ſtretched out upon the *rack* of needleſſe delaies, till both their purſe-ſtrings, and hear-ſtrings crack. Surely, there is an evil report abroad concerning ſome of you, that you betray the *priviledges of this Sanctuary*; which makes many an honeſt man rather run all hazards, then fly thither for refuge. 'Tis ſaid, ſome of you are like indented Pictures, which if you look on them ſeverall wayes, preſent you with ſeverall faces in one Table; ſuch as can take on both hands, of one to ſpeak, and of another to hold their peace, or (as bad) to ſay nothing to the purpoſe. As Juries ſhould not by verdict, ſo neither ſhould Lawyers by pleading, turn *ears* into *horns*, and *horns* into *ears*, repreſent a man or cauſe otherwiſe then they are.

I know not to whom to recommend the care of the *Prison*, but to you all. I know it is the Sheriffs Prison, but I know not how farre his power extends in the things that I am to move in order to its reformation. At most, Sheriffs are annual, and can take order but for their year; but you, my Lord, and the Bench, may reform for perpetuity.

For my part, I look upon Goals, as they are usually furnished with Keepers, as houses of *Infection*, *and looseneſſe*, rather then houses (as they should be) of *correction*, *and restraint*. For my part, it hath sadded my soul to hear, when I have come in and out to see prisoners, the poor Felons in the Dungeon raunting and roaring, as if they were resolved to walk by the Epicures principles, *Let us eat and drink, for to morrow we shall die.* And I fear scarce any one comes within those walls, but he is made *ten times more the childe of the Devil then he was before.* O that you, my Lord, and the Bench, would take some course that those poor creatures that have not long to *live*, may be made fit to *die*, that they might be Catechised and Preached to. I hear there are places where the Prisons have a Preacher appointed and allowed upon the Sheriffs accounts. For Gods sake, my Lord, and Gentlemen, let something be done herein, that those you condemn to the *Gallowes*, may not be sent to the *Devil* too.

1 Cor. 15. 32.

Lastly, *you of the Countrey*, that have businesse with the Court, look to it, take heed of malice, perjurie, and revenge. You that go to Law with one another, if for trifles, let fall your suits; the charges you put any one to in a vexatious suit, is so much money pickt out of his purse, and it may be so much necessary sustenance pluckt out of his poor wives and childrens bellies; if for matters of moment, and your cause be just, yet use mercy, charity, and moderation.

Lastly,

Laſtly, let us all beſeech the Lord, who is *the Judge of Judges*, as well as *King of Kings*, and *Lord of Lords*, that he will be with ours in the Judgement, that ſo (to cloſe my Sermon, with the cloſe of my Pſalm) *All the horns of the wicked may be cut off, but the horns of the righteous may be exalted.*

FINIS.

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